What Is Claimed Is:

1.   An inventory access system for accessing products and services in multiple inventories with a high degree of automation, the system comprising:

5   . (a)   at least one user interface that transmits data to and receives data from a user via a telephone;

(b)   a speech synthesis module that translates information received from the user interface; .

(c)   an inventory interface that transmits data between the inventory access system and
10   one or more inventory databases, wherein the inventory databases containing information about items in an inventory, and wherein the inventory interface communicates translated instructions · from the speech synthesis module to the inventory databases;

(d) .   a library containing one or more library databases, wherein the library databases have criteria with which to search the inventory databases, and wherein the library is accessed in
15   response to instructions by the user through the user interface; and

(e)   a switch engine that directs and controls the flow of information between the at least one user interface, the inventory interface, and the library,

wherein the user is provided with access to one or more items in the inventory, and wherein a user can utilize the user interface to contact a live travel attendant if so desired.

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2.   The inventory access system of claim 1, wherein the inventory interface also transmits and receives data from the inventory databases, which contain information about items in an inventory, to a third party individual or organization.

3.   The inventory access system of claim 1, wherein the inventory comprises one or more items selected from the group consisting of: open seats on airline flights, available rooms in hotels or resorts, and available automobiles in a rental car fleet.

4.   The inventory access system of claim 1, wherein the at least one user interface is an integrated voice recognition module.

5. A method for facilitating voice-activated inventory access using a system that has automated primary capabilities and live assistance capabilities for secondary support, the method comprising:

receiving speech signals from user utterances;

5   matching the speech signals using a voice recognition module;

generating a menu of system transaction options for the user from a library, wherein the library includes at least one database;

receiving a user selection from the menu of system transaction options;

presenting an inventory to the user that correlates with the user's menu selection;

10   receiving a user selection from the inventory presented;

interfacing with inventory and flight tracking sources; and

confirming the user selected inventory, wherein the user is able to exit the automated system and receive live assistance on demand.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising: creating a user profile that contains basic identifying information.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising: storing the user profile in an identification/authorization database.

8. The method of claim 5, wherein the user utterances are received from a user interface.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the user interface is a telephone.

10. The method of claim 5, wherein the matching of the speech signals by the voice recognition module facilitates voice verification that the user is an authorized user of the system.

11.   The method of claim 5, wherein an access code is used to verify that the user is an authorized user of the system.

12.   The method of claim 5, further comprising: creating a user template that is accessed once the user identity has been verified, wherein the user template includes rules and information regarding the user's profile.

13.   The method of claim 5, wherein the inventory is generated from multiple suppliers of travel products and travel related services.

14.   The method of claim 5, wherein the system uses voice prompted scripts to communicate with the user.

15.   The method of claim 5, wherein the inventory access system facilitates ascertaining the availability and pricing information of one or more seats on airline flights.

16.   The method of claim 5, wherein the inventory access system further comprises a library of information that includes a variety of databases.

17.   The method of claim 5, wherein the system incorporates a switch engine that accepts and processes information from the voice recognition module and the library, and also accepts and processes information concerning inventory of a supplier's travel products and services.

18.   The method of claim 5, wherein the system further comprises an adjunct client interface that transmits copies of trip itineraries and receipts for completed transaction.

19.   The method of claim 5, wherein the method facilitates: creating a trip itinerary in response to a "schedule" voice command.

20.   The method of claim 5, wherein the method facilitates voice commands that include at least one command from the group consisting of: "agent," "repeat," "start over," "good-bye," and "main menu."

21.   The method of claim 5, wherein the method facilitates retrieving information about an existing itinerary.

22.   The method of claim 5, wherein the method facilitates canceling an existing itinerary.

23.   The method of claim 5, wherein the method facilitates modifying a trip itinerary.

24.   The method of claim 5, wherein the method facilitates setting a watching function for an arriving or departing flight that monitors the status of the flight and reports any significant changes to the user.

25.   The method of claim 5, wherein the method facilitates obtaining information about a scheduled airline flights.

26.   The method of claim 5, wherein the method facilitates receiving courtesy message about an existing trip.

27.   The method of claim 5, wherein the inventory and flight tracking sources include at least one from the group consisting of: an airlines computer reservation system, a global distribution system, an airline inventory of available seats, and hotel inventory of open rooms.

28.   A voice-activated inventory access system that has automated primary capabilities and live assistance capabilities for secondary support, wherein the system accesses products and services in multiple inventories with a high degree of automation, the system comprising:

a voice-based user interface that facilitates communicating information to and from a

5 user;

a voice recognition module that translates the information received from the user

interface;

an inventory interface, wherein the inventory interface communicates data between the

inventory access system and one or more inventory databases, the inventory databases containing

10 information relating to items in an inventory;

a library containing one or more library databases, wherein the library databases at least

include information relating to user identification and access protocols, and wherein the library

databases also include criteria for searching the inventory databases; and

a switch module, wherein the switch module directs and controls the flow of information

15 between the inventory interface, the library, and user interface via the voice recognition module;

wherein the user selects a system transaction from a menu in the library, is provided with

access to one or more items in the inventory, selects an item from the inventory presented, and

receives confirmation of the user selected inventory after the system has interfaced with the

inventory databases, and

20 wherein a user can utilize the user interface to contact a live agent at any time.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein the library includes a user profile that contains

basic identifying information.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein the user profile is stored in an

identification/authorization database within the library.

31. The system of claim 28, wherein the user interface is a telephone.

32. The system of claim 28, wherein the voice recognition module provides voice

verification that the user is an authorized user of the system.

33.   The system of claim 28, wherein an access code is used to verify that the user is an authorized user of the system.

34.   The system of claim 28, wherein the library includes a user template that is accessed once the user identity has been verified, wherein the user template includes rules and information regarding the user's profile.

35.   The system of claim 28, wherein the inventory, which is accessed through the inventory interface, is generated from multiple suppliers of travel products and travel related services.

36.   The system of claim 28, wherein the system uses voice prompted scripts to communicate with the user.

37.   The system of claim 28, wherein the system facilitates ascertaining the availability and pricing information of one or more seats on airline flights.

38.   The system of claim 28, further comprising an adjunct client interface that transmits electronic copies of trip itineraries and receipts to the user.

39.   The system of claim 28, wherein a user initiates creating a trip itinerary in response to a "schedule" voice command.

40.   The system of claim 28, wherein the system utilizes voice commands that include at least one command from the group consisting of: "agent," "repeat," "start over," "good-bye," and "main menu."

41.   The system of claim 28, wherein the system facilitates retrieving information about an existing itinerary.

42.   The system of claim 28, wherein the system facilitates canceling an existing itinerary.

43.   The system of claim 28, wherein the system facilitates modifying a trip itinerary.

44.   The system of claim 28, wherein the system facilitates setting a watching function for an arriving or departing flight that monitors the status of the flight, and reporting any significant changes to the user.

45.   The system of claim 28, wherein the system facilitates obtaining information about a scheduled airline flights.

46.   The system of claim 28, wherein the system facilitates receiving courtesy message about an existing trip.

47.   The system of claim 28, wherein the inventory items include at least one item selected from the group consisting of: an airlines computer reservation system, a global distribution system, an airline inventory of available seats, and hotel inventory of open rooms.

48.   The system of claim 28, wherein the system facilitates rescheduling of airline flights cancelled by an airline.